

REGION 10 — MARINE

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Early winter was comparatively mild with considerable rain. There was very little snow on western Long Island until a two-day snowstorm beginning on Mar 3 brought an official 14 inches in New York City and reports of up to 23 inches in western Nassau County. Although an increase in the numbers of Redwings and Grackles was noted in late Feb, cold weather followed this early Mar storm which retarded further movements northward.

Very strong northwest winds accompanied the first day (Jan 17) of the sixth annual Federation waterfowl count, but fairly good mid-winter weather followed with little snow on the ground and only sheltered ponds frozen.

It was the best flight year in many for Rough-legged Hawks, Redpolls, and Evening Grosbeaks, but it was poor for Horned Larks, Shrikes, and Crossbills. There was a good hawk count in the Staten Island Christmas census and a remarkable two-hour flight of seven species of gulls at Riis Park on Dec 5. It was a good winter for owls, and Dovekies were the most common of the alcids reported. Few, if any, western species turned up at our feeders, but a Lincoln's Sparrow at Little Neck was our first winter record for this bird. Good numbers of Cardinals have apparently extended their range eastward, this year wintering to Orient and East Hampton.

Loons — Ducks: Fairly good numbers of Common Loons were present in the Federation waterfowl count. Horned Grebes also were plentiful (total 904 for the region), but Pied-billed Grebes were way down. An Eared Grebe was reported at Carmans River on Jan 3, 6, and 8; the bird was clearly identified at close range (D. Puleston). Twenty Common Egrets and three Snowies were present at Jamaica Bay on Dec 13 (Norce). A single Common Egret was at Mastic on Jan 24 (Raynor), and another was at Center Moriches on Mar 20 (Wilcox). Nine Whistling Swans were counted on the Federation census at Mecox (McKeever), and a pair was at the Yaphank lake after Feb 28 (Puleston). Rarities on the census were seven Snow Geese, three Wood Ducks, three King Eiders, two Harlequin Ducks, and one European Widgeon; also rare was the Red-necked Grebe; one this year, none last, 21 in 1958. The Canada Goose population on the census shows a steady decline; this year's 1,219 was short of last year's 1,366 and well below the 1,952 on 1958. What was presumed to be a Hutchin's Goose was seen at Little Neck Bay around the end of the year and also on the census (R. Adelson, Queens Bird Club). There was no Common (European) Teal reported during the winter. Some 519 Mute Swans were counted in the Moriches area alone on Dec 26 (Central Suffolk Christmas Count), whereas only 494 were totaled in the entire region on the waterfowl count. This may indicate an off-island movement during freeze-ups. This year the Brant count was over 20,000, but Scaup were way down. A remarkably close Mallard average on Long Island, mostly among feral birds, is: 2,914 in 1957, 2,950 in 1959, and 2,926 in 1960. Green-winged Teal and Pintail were about the same as the last two years, but Shovelers and Redheads hit a record low; eight and 11 respectively. Goldeneyes remained about the same as the last two years with 235 counted on the Staten Island and New York Bay waterfowl count, and there were 265 Bufflehead (Ed Whelen, Brooklyn Bird Club). Perhaps the most seriously affected of all our bay ducks is the Red-breasted Merganser which has shown a continual decrease for all six years of the Federation counts. Other duck reports were Barrow's Goldeneye shot at Oakdale on Dec 6 (J. Strong), Blue-winged Teal at Alley Pond on Mar 27, and several reports of Blue and Snow Geese, Wood Ducks, Eiders and Harlequins.

Hawks — Owls: A Goshawk was at Hillview Reservoir on Dec 27 (Sedwitz, Phelan), and another was at Poundridge on Feb 7 (Buckley). Seen on Staten Island on Dec 26 were two Red-tails, two Red-shoulders, two Rough-legs, one Marsh, and six Sparrow Hawks (Christmas count). A Bald Eagle was at Brookhaven Dec 26; the species was reported wintering (Puleston). Other Brookhaven reports included one Cooper's on Jan 26, three Rough-legs, a Peregrine Falcon on Dec 26, and a Pigeon Hawk wintering. Other falcon records include a Peregrine Falcon at Jamaica Bay on Dec 6 (numerous observers) and single Pigeon Hawks on Dec 6 at Atlantic Beach (Mayer, Rose) and Jones Beach (Dignan, Levine, Ward).

A King Rail wintered at Brookhaven. The bird was first seen Dec 18; it was caught during the big snow in March, banded, and released (Puleston). Other King Rails include two at Lawrence on Jan 2 (Bull) and one at Mastic on Dec 26 (D. L. and W. F. Nichols). One Sora and four Virginia Rails were observed on Dec 26

(Central Suffolk County census). A Sora was in the Baxter Creek area of the Bronx on Dec 27. Clapper and Virginia Rails were recorded at Clason Point that same day (Norse, Cantor, Post).

A Semipalmated Plover was at Atlantic Beach on Dec 13 (Norse), and two Piping Plovers were seen at Moriches on Dec 26 (Wilcox). Seven Black-bellied Plover were at Oak Beach on Feb 27 (Pembleton). An estimated 600 Dunlin were at Jones Inlet on Jan 16 (Bull). There was a good gull count on the Staten Island census with one Glaucous, one Iceland, 22,960 Herring, 256 Bonaparte's, and five Ring-bills. An Iceland Gull was at Clason Point on Dec 27 (Post, Cantor). A two-hour gull flight at Riis Park on Dec 5 included three Laughing, an estimated 600 Bonaparte's, and one Little Gull (Mayer, Rose). An adult Black-headed Gull was in New York bay on Feb 26 (Norse).

A Razorbill was at Montauk on Jan 2 (Raynor), and a dead bird was found at Jones Beach on Feb 28 (Norse). A Razorbill was present in Pelham Bay, Glen Island area, from Jan 31 - Feb 22 (Buckley, Post, Norse). Many oiled Dovekies were found near Montauk in Dec and Jan. There were numerous owl reports, including three or four of the snowy. Three Long-eared Owls were at Wheatley Hills on Dec 27 (Heck, Davin), and four Saw-whet Owls were seen at Jones Beach on Dec 5 (same observers). There were two Great Horned Owl nesting records, from Brookhaven and Pelham.

Goatsuckers — Shrikes: A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was noted at Alley Pond on Mar 27 (Yeaton). Two Phoebees were observed at East Moriches on Dec 26 (Raynor), and the Tree Swallow was reported at Jamaica Bay on Dec 6 (numerous observers). A Magpie was at Jones Beach on Mar 20 (Garland). A Tufted Titmouse wintered at Munsey Park (Mrs. M. B. Cross), and two Carolina Wrens were at Orient during Feb (Latham). Three Winter Wrens wintered at Yaphank, as did a Mockingbird at Westhampton. A Mocker was at Montauk on Dec 28 (Pulston). The Hermit Thrush was seen daily at Monorville (Raynor). Six Water Pipits were at Montauk on Jan 2 (Puleston, Raynor), and four Cedar Waxwings were noted at Dix Hills on Jan 19 (Pembleton, Good). Two Loggerhead Shrikes were at Baxter Creek on Dec 27 (Norse, Cantor Post), and there was one at Dix Hills on Jan 1 (Pembleton, Good).

Warblers — Sparrows: Although hundreds of Myrtle Warblers were seen on western Long Island in the bayberry, poison-ivy dune tracts, with both berries available, only one was reported in the entire eight areas of the Central Suffolk Christmas count around the same time. A Yellow-breasted Chat was present at Far Rockaway from Feb 28 to Mar 15 (Bull), and another was at Brookhaven on Jan 10 (Puleston). Meadowlarks were reported as abundant on the Christmas counts. Four Red-winged Blackbirds on Feb 16 at Orient were the first there, but several Grackles wintered (Latham). Cardinals are increasing yearly on eastern Long Island where they were unknown a decade ago. Fourteen were seen on the Christmas count, they nested at East Hampton last summer, and they wintered there this year. There were four at nearly every feeding station from Orient to Riverhead (Latham). Three House Finches wintered at Center Moriches, and there were about ten at East Patchogue (Raynor). Single Dickcissels were at Wantagh in Feb (Miss Allison) and Tackapausha on Mar 4 (Morgan). There were numerous Evening Grosbeak records, with 20 daily at Freeport (Dignan), nine at Orient in mid-Feb, and a flock at Great River (Wilcox). The only Pine Grosbeak report was from Jones Beach in early Dec. There was a tremendous flight of Redpolls, 110 being banded at one feeding station on Mar 16 (Wilcox). Several Hoary Redpolls were reported. One at Jones Beach on Mar 6 was carefully studied for one-half hour, and a later check with American Museum specimens convinced observers of the identity (L. Garland, Julig). Some 41 Pine Siskins were at Montauk on Jan 2 (Raynor). Crossbills were generally scarce, but 15 White-wings were at Montauk on Feb 21 (Norse, Buckley), and there were one or two other records. Four Ipswich Sparrows were noted on the Central Suffolk census of Dec 26; two were at Montauk on Feb 22 (Raynor), and there was one at Oak Beach on Mar 13 (Elliott). Sixteen Vesper Sparrows were at Manorville on Dec 26 (Raynor), and there were six on Mar 14 at Dix Hills. A Chipping Sparrow was observed at Dix Hills on Mar 10 (Pembleton, Good). Twenty Lapland Longspurs were at Spring Creek on Feb 13, and one was at Clason Point on Dec 27 (Norse). Of Snow Buntings at Orient, Latham writes "largest number in many years here — a flock on farm of 600 - 700."

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